

STATUS OF WOMEN IN MICHIGAN COUNTIES

August 2005

Research Overview

This research overview describes the status of women in Michigan counties. It is a tool for grantseekers, policy makers and the general public. Five indicators were used to assess women's status: 1) political participation, 2) employment and earnings, 3) social and economic autonomy, 4) reproductive rights, and 5) health and well-being. The indicators were based on the indicators recommended by *The Status of Women in Your County: A Community Research Tool*, *The Institute for Women's Policy Research*. The Michigan Women's Commission compiled composite data in each of these subject areas and ranked the counties in quartiles – high, medium-high, medium-low and low

Demographics

Overall demographic information for Michigan women shows that 50.8 percent of the population is female. Of the female population, 78 percent identify as white, 17.3 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino, 14.5 percent identify as Black or African American; 3 percent identify as two or more races, 0.6 percent of women identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.03 percent identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. Regarding marital status, 53 percent of women, aged 15 and older, are married; 25 percent have never been married; 11 percent are divorced; and 10 percent are widowed.

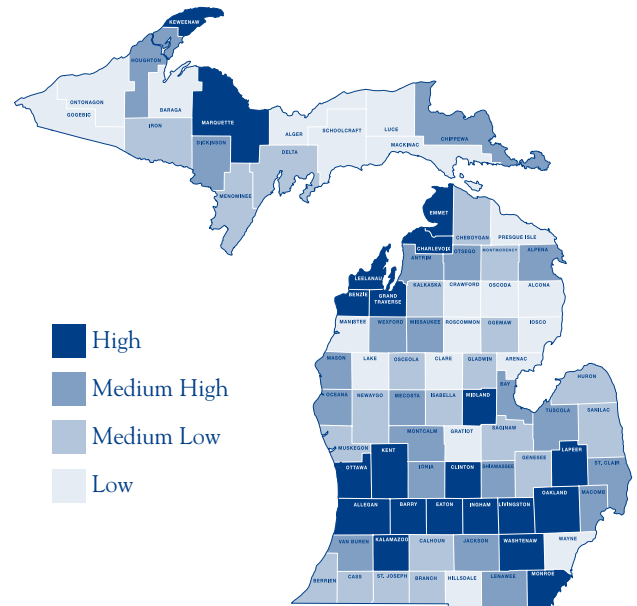
Overall County Ranking on the Status of Women

Of Michigan's 83 counties, the highest ranking counties for all five indicators combined are Livingston and Washtenaw. The data was normalized and in certain cases when data was not available an average was used. A normalized value was calculated for each indicator for each county by subtracting the mean from the specific indicator value and dividing by the standard deviation. Table 1 shows the ranking, using the composite data from the five indicators. Map 1 shows the overall ranking of the 83 counties that was derived by adding and ranking the normalized scores for all counties.

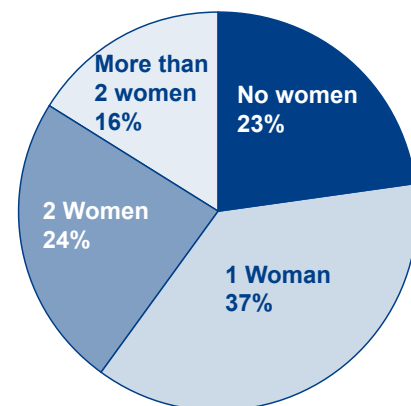
Political Participation

Political participation is key to ensuring that women's priorities and needs are reflected in spending and policy decisions made at all levels of government. By registering to vote, voting, and electing women to public office, women can become a greater force in governmental decision-making. We know that when women participate in the political process, they make sure that women and families are taken into account when decisions are made.

Map 1 – Overall County Ranking on the Status of Women



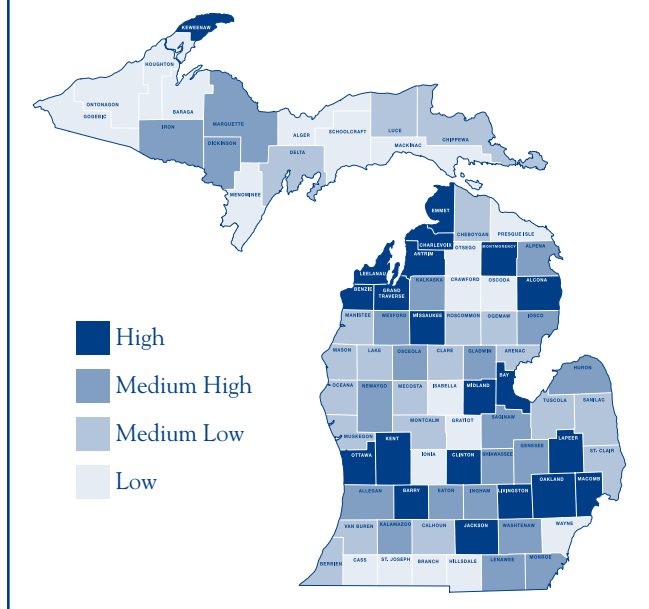
Graph 1 – Number of Women Serving on County Commissions



In Michigan, indicators of women's political participation do not reflect the percentage of women in the population. The number of women serving as elected officials is much lower than we would expect, given that approximately half of the population in every county is female.

In the 2004 general election, 70.3 percent of Michigan women were registered to vote, according to the Michigan Secretary of State. However, 61.6 percent of the women actually voted in the 2004 general election.

Map 2 – Political Participation County Ranking



County Data

- The top two counties in women's voter turn out were Keweenaw and Leelanau.
- 19 out of 83 counties have no women county commissioners.
- The county with the most women serving on the county commission is Arenac, where 4 out of 5 commissioners are women.
- Leelanau and Keweenaw counties have the highest percentage of women registered voters; the lowest percentage was in Isabella.
- Michigan has one Michigan Women's Commission that serves the state, one county women's commission, the Ingham County Women's Commission and one city women's commission, the Detroit Women's Commission, which is inactive.

The political participation index is based on the percentage of women who voted in the last general election.

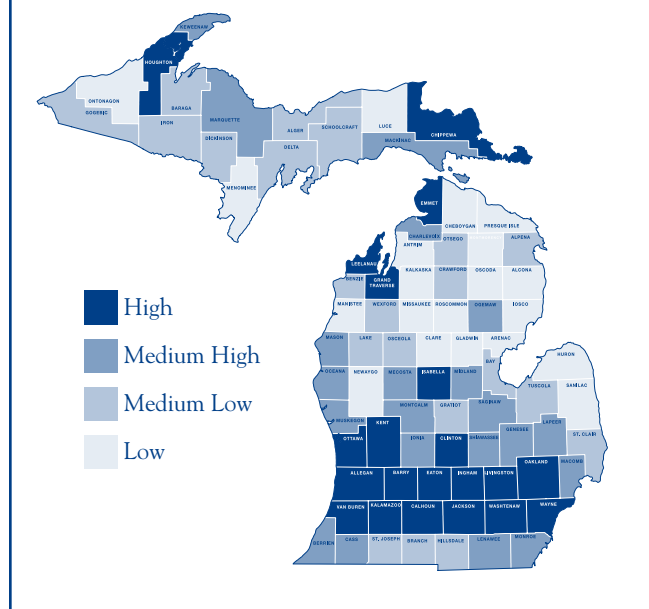
Map 2 shows the ranking of the 83 counties for political participation

Employment and Earnings

Inequities between women's and men's economic status not only hurt women as individuals, but also their spouses and families. A woman's earnings determine both her immediate economic status and her future financial security, as retirement benefits from Social Security are based on earnings. An examination of employment and earnings data reveal inequities between Michigan men and Michigan women.

Using 2000 data, the median annual income for Michigan women is \$30,700. Using 2000 data, the ratio of women's to men's earnings is 66.70 cents for every \$1.00 in

Map 3 – Employment and Earnings Status County Ranking



Michigan. We rank 49th in the nation for the ratio of women's to men's earnings.

In Michigan, according to the 2000 US Census, 58.90 percent of women participate in the labor force. The percentage of Michigan women employed in management, professional and related occupations is 31.60 percent.

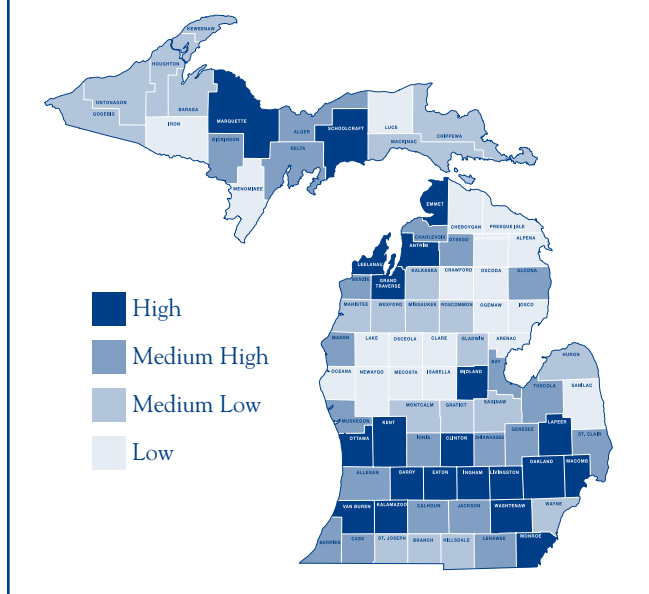
County Data:

- The counties with the highest labor force participation rate for women are Ottawa, 64.83 percent, and Ingham, 64.19 percent. The county with the lowest women's participation rate is Montmorency, 40.49 percent.
- Oakland has the highest median annual income for women, \$35,890, followed by Washtenaw at \$33,598. The lowest median annual income, \$19,999, is in Montmorency. In every county, women's median income is less than men's. In 11 counties, the median income for women was under \$21,000.
- According to county data, Antrim has the widest wage gap, with women earning 37.29 cents for every dollar earned by men. The counties with the narrowest wage gap are Ogemaw, 98.52 cents, and Oceana, 96.85 cents, for every dollar.
- Washtenaw county has the highest percentage of women employed in management, professional and related occupations, 47.50 percent. The lowest percentage is in Montmorency at 21.74 percent.

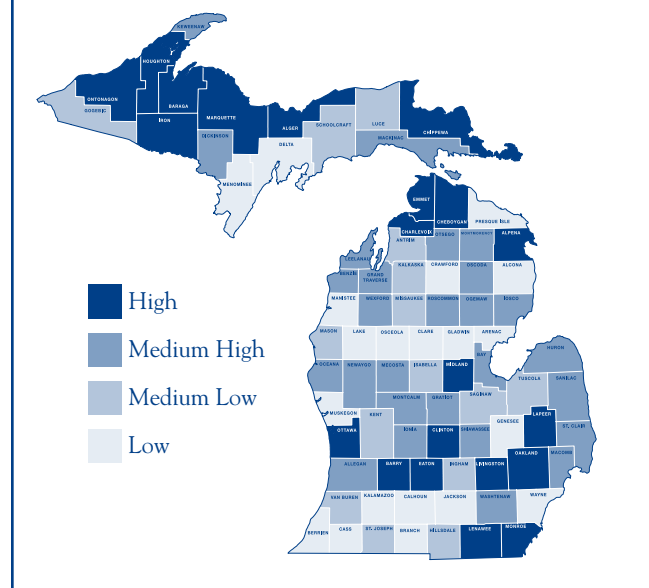
The employment and earnings index is based on a composite ranking of women's median annual income, percentage of women participating in the labor force and percentage of women employed in management, professional and related occupations.

Map 3 shows the ranking of the 83 counties for employment and earnings.

**Map 4 – Social and Economic Status
County Rankings**



**Map 5 – Reproductive Rights
County Ranking**



Social and Economic Autonomy

To strengthen the social and economic well-being of Michigan women, we need to address the needs of women in poverty. We need to assure access to educational opportunity and health care. We need to help women own and operate businesses. These are important factors in forming and maintaining women's independence and well-being.

According to the 2000 Census, 11.30 percent of Michigan women live below the poverty line. 20.2 percent of Michigan women have completed four or more years of college. According to the Michigan Primary Care Association, 90.02 percent of Michigan women have health insurance. 27.20 percent of all businesses in Michigan are owned by women, according to 1997 Census data

County Data:

- The county with the highest percentage of women living in poverty is Isabella, 23.05 percent. The county with the lowest percentage is Clinton, 5.61 percent.
- The number of women having health insurance ranges between 85.56 percent to 91.94 percent. Most Michigan women have some form of health insurance.
- Washtenaw has the highest percentage of women who have completed four or more years of college, 46.58. The county with the lowest percentage, 7.11 percent, is Montmorency.
- Schoolcraft county has 42.70 of its businesses owned by women, and Iosco has the lowest percentage, 12.90 percent.

The composite ranking for social and economic autonomy is based on the percentage of women living below the poverty line, the percentage of women with health insurance, the percentage of women with four or more years of college, and the number of women-owned business.

Map 4 shows the ranking of the 83 counties for social and economic autonomy,

Reproductive Rights

The Platform of Action developed by the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995, outlines the basic rights of women throughout the world. 189 countries, including the United States, have adopted the Platform for Action. It states that reproductive health includes the ability to have a safe, satisfying sex life; to reproduce; and to decide if, when, and how often to do so. This section provides information on county employee's health coverage for infertility and health plans, infant mortality rate, low birth weight rate and degree of access to prenatal care.

Michigan does not require coverage of contraceptives in either private or public employee health insurance programs. Michigan's infant mortality rate averaged for 1999-2003 is 8.000 per 1,000 live births. 8 percent of all Michigan babies born in 2003 were low birth weight. 85 percent of Michigan's pregnant women received prenatal care in the first trimester.

County Data:

- The Michigan Women's Commission conducted a telephone survey, in 2005, of Michigan counties, concerning health benefits offered to county employees. We discovered that 28 counties (34 percent) provided infertility coverage through their health plans for county employees.
- According to the survey, 48 counties (58 percent) covered contraceptives for their employees. 35 percent did not provide coverage of contraceptives, 4 percent of counties did not know whether contraceptives were covered, and two counties refused to answer the survey question.
- 23 counties, 28 percent, cover both infertility and contraceptives for county employees.

- The counties with the highest infant mortality rate are Alcona, 15.8, Crawford, 15.7, Presque Isle, 15.10, and Wayne, 11.00. Some counties have numbers statistically too low to calculate an infant mortality rate.
- The counties with the highest percentage of low-birth weight babies were Arenac, 12.34 percent, and Alcona, 11.67 percent. The lowest percentage was Alger, 3.08 percent.
- The number of pregnant women receiving prenatal care in the first semester ranged from Cheboygan, 94.90 percent, to a low in Lake of 65 percent.

The ranking for the counties is based on the infant mortality rate, the percentage of low birth weight babies, and the percent receiving prenatal care in the first trimester.

Map 5 shows the ranking by the 83 county for reproductive rights.

reported domestic violence abuse to police in Michigan in 2003. We know this is an underestimate of the number of women who actually experienced domestic violence.

County Data:

- The county with the highest mortality rate from heart disease is Ontonagon and the lowest is Keweenaw.
- The county with the highest rate of lung disease is Baraga and the lowest rate is Missaukee.
- The county with the highest breast cancer rate is Gogebic and the lowest is Menominee.
- Wayne county has the highest reported number of women 13 years of age and older living with AIDS or HIV.
- The county with the highest number of reported domestic violence cases is Wayne and the lowest is Montmorency.

The composite index includes reported domestic violence and mortality rates from heart disease and lung and breast cancer.

Map 6 shows the ranking of the 83 counties for health and well-being.

Conclusion & Recommendations

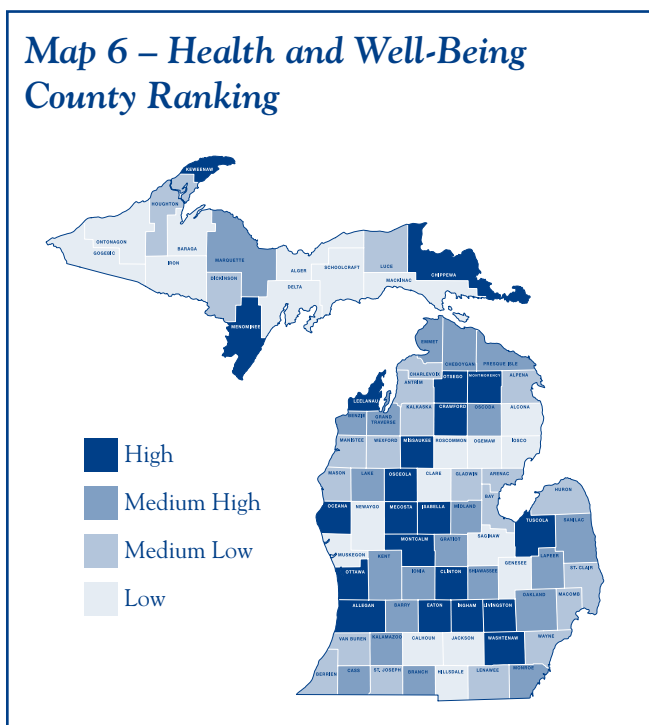
The Michigan Women's Commission and James A. & Faith Knight Foundation regard this report as a starting point and look forward to working with local communities to do further research on the disparities facing Michigan women.

We urge readers to use this tool, and to examine the resources from the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), including the two reports, *The Status of Women in Michigan* and *The Status of Women in the States*, available at www.iwpr.org.

It is critical to work with others to turn research into action. Have discussions with the volunteer groups that may share your interest in women and girls. Possible allies include the League of Women Voters, the Girl Scouts, the AAUW, the Chamber of Commerce or the Athena Foundation, NAWBO, the Junior League, the Title IX coordinators that all school districts have, as well as women's studies departments at local colleges; all potentially have an interest in the information. Share the findings and then see if you can choose a single issue to act on. For example, create a county Women's Commission to monitor the indicators discussed in the report. Or look at the school curriculum to see if it is fair to girls in preparing them for jobs that will provide them with economic self-sufficiency. Perhaps you want to increase the number of women candidates or change a policy that affects women's health. And do what you can to work with the media to launch a public awareness campaign or highlight case studies that support the research. Use this information to describe the need, understand the challenge and document the change.

(continued on page 6)

**Map 6 – Health and Well-Being
County Ranking**



Health and Well-Being

Health is a critical factor in women's overall status. The county study includes the rate of mortality from various causes: heart disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV and AIDS, and domestic violence, as measures of women's health.

Far more women die from heart disease in Michigan than from any other cause. The mortality rate is 254.71 per 100,000 women. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Michigan women. The mortality rate from lung cancer for Michigan women is 48.89 per 100,000 women, and breast cancer is 27.70 per 100,000 women. It is estimated that approximately 6 percent of Michigan women over 18 have diabetes. There were 37,216 women who

Table 1 – County-by-County Ranking

County	Political Participation Rank	Employment & Earnings Rank	Social & Economic Rank	Health & Well-Being Rank	Reproductive Rights Rank	Total Overall Rank	Quartile
Alcona	10	71	27	69	82	66	4
Alger	81	54	25	75	6	74	4
Allegan	27	17	31	8	34	18	1
Alpena	38	56	68	50	12	42	2
Antrim	7	77	13	56	61	40	2
Arenac	45	80	76	61	78	78	4
Baraga	80	59	54	81	19	82	4
Barry	13	6	7	26	15	8	1
Bay	16	45	32	57	24	28	2
Benzie	4	43	26	40	48	17	2
Berrien	50	32	36	62	80	62	3
Branch	71	46	61	29	65	63	3
Calhoun	56	15	38	66	67	46	3
Cass	70	37	28	37	71	52	3
Charlevoix	11	34	41	43	5	19	1
Cheboygan	61	73	66	39	17	45	3
Chippewa	46	18	55	15	3	24	2
Clare	54	75	81	67	74	77	4
Clinton	8	2	3	2	16	3	1
Crawford	76	57	71	5	76	70	4
Delta	51	60	37	68	73	61	3
Dickinson	35	55	39	55	41	36	2
Eaton	28	4	5	7	14	7	1
Emmet	9	8	21	27	8	10	1
Genesee	34	35	40	65	75	54	3
Gladwin	23	69	57	46	68	56	3
Gogebic	68	52	43	83	63	76	4
Grand Traverse	5	10	8	35	26	9	1
Gratiot	77	48	50	30	44	75	4
Hillsdale	67	50	44	77	59	64	4
Houghton	72	21	53	60	2	37	2
Huron	36	66	48	59	25	44	3
Ingham	42	1	18	4	49	12	1
Ionia	75	27	24	42	31	39	2
Iosco	39	70	83	79	43	73	4
Iron	33	58	65	82	10	57	3
Isabella	73	11	70	10	58	47	3
Jackson	3	19	33	72	70	26	2
Kalamazoo	32	3	15	31	66	21	1
Kalkaska	25	79	60	54	50	53	3
Kent	18	7	14	24	52	14	1
Keweenaw	1	28	49	17	35	13	1
Lake	47	63	69	23	83	72	4
Lapeer	20	41	17	25	9	16	1
Leelanau	2	9	11	11	27	5	1
Lenawee	40	22	30	22	2	22	2
Lapeer	6	12	4	13	1	1	1
Luce	62	67	75	45	60	65	4
Mackinac	79	25	51	74	42	80	4
Macomb	21	26	20	49	40	23	2
Manistee	48	81	59	63	77	71	4

County	Political Participation Rank	Employment & Earnings Rank	Social & Economic Rank	Health & Well-Being Rank	Reproductive Rights Rank	Total Overall Rank	Quartile
Marquette	30	29	19	33	13	20	1
Mason	57	36	34	47	62	41	2
Mecosta	63	40	77	3	46	38	2
Menominee	64	64	72	19	72	59	3
Midland	15	24	10	22	18	11	1
Missaukee	17	74	45	1	56	27	2
Monroe	22	31	9	32	21	15	1
Montcalm	60	42	63	16	39	35	2
Montmorency	19	83	78	18	47	58	3
Muskegon	44	23	42	70	69	50	3
Newaygo	41	65	64	64	37	55	3
Oakland	12	12	2	28	20	4	1
Oceana	55	38	73	14	45	31	2
Ogemaw	43	30	82	73	32	43	3
Ontonagon	83	76	46	71	7	79	4
Osceola	37	44	79	20	64	48	3
Oscoda	65	82	80	36	36	68	4
Otsego	74	62	23	12	22	32	2
Ottawa	14	13	6	6	11	6	1
Presque Isle	82	78	74	34	79	83	4
Roscommon	49	68	62	80	23	67	4
Saginaw	31	39	47	76	53	49	3
Sanilac	52	72	67	38	38	51	3
Schoolcraft	78	61	12	78	57	81	4
Shiawassee	26	33	29	41	29	25	2
St. Clair	53	53	35	51	30	33	2
St. Joseph	69	51	56	53	54	60	3
Tuscola	59	47	22	21	55	30	2
Van Buren	58	16	16	52	51	29	2
Washtenaw	24	5	1	9	28	2	1
Wayne	66	20	58	58	81	69	4
Wexford	29	49	52	48	33	34	2

More in-depth research for each county with a profile of each county is available on our web site, www.michigan.gov/mdcr. The sources used for the data are listed on each county report.

We look forward to working with you to improve the indicators for Michigan women.

The James A. & Faith Knight Foundation, primarily serving Jackson & Washtenaw counties, is dedicated to improving communities by providing grant support to qualified nonprofits that serve the needs of women and girls, animals and the natural world, and internal capacity. For more information, see www.KnightFoundationMI.org.

The Michigan Women's Commission works to improve the quality of life for Michigan women. For more information, see www.michigan.gov/mdcr.

Data from the following sources:

2000 US Census

Michigan State University Extension, State and Local Government Team, December 2004.

Michigan Secretary of State

MI Primary Care Association

1997 Census Bureau Report on Women Owned Businesses

1999 to 2003 average from MDCH

2003 MDCH

2003 MI Uniform Crime Report